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ACTION AF-05

INFO OCT-01 SS-20 PM-03 H-01 INR-06 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00
NSC-10 NSCE-00 PRS-01 L-02 RSR-01 RSC-01 /051 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3299

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 2041

LIMDIS

SUBJ: SYMINGTON HEARINGS

REF: A) STATE 079515; B) TRIPOLI 1119

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED EARLIER TELEGRAMS ON PINCUS/PAUL VISIT AND RECENT GENERAL POLICY MATERIALS PROVIDED DEPT AND BELIEVE THERE NOTHING ADDITIONAL WE CAN ADD BEYOND CURRENT ASSESSMENT ERITREAN SITUATION WHICH WE ASSUME LIKELY BE RAISED IN SECRET SESSIONS BY COMMITTEE. OUR CURRENT APPRAISAL FOLLOWS.
2. ALL ELEMENTS US MISSION ADDIS CONCUR THERE HAS BEEN SOME INCREASE IN LEVEL OF ELF ACTIVITY RECENT MONTHS BUT THAT THIS IN PART EXPLAINED BY NORMAL SEASONAL UPSWING SUCH ACTIVITY, SEVERE DROUGHT WITH RESULTANT INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT AND NEAR FAMINE CERTAIN AREAS, AND APPARENT INCREASED INPUT EXTERNAL AID. WE SHOULD DISCOUNT OUR IMPRESSION OF EFFECT OF INCREASED NUMBER INCIDENTS INVOLVING US PERSONNEL AND FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ELF PUBLICITY AND SOME STEP-UP VIOLENT INCIDENTS ALL OF WHICH MAY GIVE US EXAGGERATED IMPRESSION INCREASED ACTIVITY.
3. IF EXTERNAL AID SHOULD STEP UP AT RAPID RATE, THE CAPACITY OF THE ELF TO CARRY OUT OPERATIONS AGAINST THE IEG COULD BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE ACCORDINGLY. AS ADDITIONAL CAVEAT CONSUL GENERAL RABIDA INCLINED TO TAKE SOMEWHAT MORE PESSIMISTIC VIEW THAN ADDIS, POSSIBLY BECAUSE HE IS VIEWING SITUATION ANEW WITHOUT BAGGAGE OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE PERIODIC SURGE AND WITHDRAWAL ELF ACTIVITY (ASMARA'S 325 REPEATED FOR DEPT'S INFORMATION). FINALLY, ANY FLARE

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UP IN M.E. WAR COULD BE EXPECTED HAVE ITS REFLECTION INCREASED
ELF ACTIVITY, AND PROBABLY DEPENDING ON TURN OF EVENTS REFLECTION
IN ETHIOPIA OF ANY TERRORIST ATTACKS ON US PERSONNEL BY ARABS.

4. SIMILAR FACTORS HAVE BROUGHT INCREASED IEG POLICE AND MILITARY
ACTIVITY AS WELL AS CURRENT DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY BY IEG. THUS ELF
LIKELY DRAW MUCH GREATER PUBLIC ATTENTION IN NEXT FEW MONTHS BUT
IMPORTANCE OF DISSIDENTS AS A REAL THREAT TO IEG UNLIKELY GREATLY
INCREASE. IEG SECURITY FORCES IF NOT DIVERTED BY BUILD UPS AND
INCURSIONS ON SUDANESE AND SOMALIA BORDERS HAVE CAPACITY TO DEAL
WITH INSURGENTS AND HAVE SHOWN INCREASING ABILITY DEAL WITH RELATED
CIVIC ACTION PROBLEMS. ABSENCE OF GOVGEN HIH RAS ASRATE KASSA
HAS REDUCED EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT ACTION. HIS ANTICIPATED
RETURN FROM LONDON IN NEXT FEW WEEKS AND HIM DECISIONS PROMISED
FOR RETURN FROM TOKYO/MOSCOW/CAIRO TRIP IN MID-JUNE SHOULD STEP
UP IEG CAMPAIGN AND HOPEFULLY BRING NECESSARY POLITICAL DECISIONS
AS WELL.

5. WISEST COURSE FOR US IS TO STAY OUT OF ACTION EXCEPT FOR
NECESSARY SUPPLIES MAP AND FAMINE RELIEF. PARTICULARLY TO BE
AVOIDED ARE JUDGMENTS ON VALIDITY ELF AND IEG POSITIONS, EFFORTS
MEDIATE BETWEEN PARTIES, REPRESENTATIONS TO ARAB GOVTS, ANY
TENDENCY TO SECOND GUESS PUBLICLY IEG TACTICS OR METHODS IN
DEALING WITH INSURGENTS. PRIMARILY, OF COURSE, BECAUSE OF
GENERAL PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OUR RELATIONS ETHIOPIA AND OUR INTEREST
IN KAGNEW, WE CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT OR COMPLETELY NEUTRAL BUT
OUR ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE GIVEN QUIETLY AND WE SHOULD AVOID PUBLIC
DISCUSSION ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS. TO EXTENT WE MEDDLE IN
ERITREAN PROBLEM WE CAN EXPECT ADVERSE REACTIONS FROM BOTH RADICAL
ARABS AND IEG. IN PAST ALL OFFICIAL ELEMENTS HERE HAVE BEEN FAIRLY
SUCCESSFUL IN FOLLOWING THIS POLICY. AMERICAN PRESS HAS BEEN
VIEWING WITH ALARM, PREDICTING ERITREAN SECESSION, AND FALL OF
HIM FOR SO LONG NOW THAT THEIR STORIES IN ETHIOPIAN AND OAU
CONTEXTS ARE HEAVILY DISCOUNTED. HOWEVER, ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS
BY EXECUTIVE BRANCH OR FREE RANGING CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE WOULD
HAVE MUCH MORE SERIOUS AND ADVERSE EFFECT.

6. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE I WOULD EXPECT LINKAGE ETHIOPIA AND
ISRAEL AND CONNECTION WITH M.E. CRISIS
TO ARISE. BECAUSE OF
DAMAGE TO ISRAEL AND ETHIOPIAN INTERESTS AS WELL AS EMBARRASSMENT
TO US, WE WOULD HOPE THIS QUESTION COULD BE HANDLED IN EXECUTIVE

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SESSION. SINCE THIS QUESTION INVOLVES INTRA-BUREAU KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSE WE ARE NOT ABLE CONTRIBUTE BEYOND EARLIER REPORTING.

7. ALSO POSSIBLE US AND CONTRASTING SOVIET INTERESTS RED SEA AND INDIAN OCEAN MAY BE RAISED. PINCUS/PAUL ALLUDED DISPARAGINGLY ON ONE OCCASION TO POSSIBLE US CONCERN ABOUT GROWING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ARAB RED SEA STATES AND WEAKENING US POSITION SAUDI ARABIA AND ETHIOPIA. THERE WAS ALSO SOME PROBING ON US INDIAN OCEAN PLANS TO WHICH WE DID NOT RESPOND BUT BECAUSE OF KAGNEW RELATION INDIAN OCEAN, PERSIAN GULF OPERATIONS QUESTION MAY BE RAISED. AGAIN, THESE INTRA-BUREAU QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANTIAL CONCERN TO US NAVY AND ON WHICH WE UNABLE CONTRIBUTE DEFINITIVE ASSESSMENT.

8. REPLY TO STATE 08005 UNDER PREPARATION.
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